



Republican Policy Committee

Don Nickles, Chairman Kelly Johnston, Staff Director 347 Russell Senate Office Building (202)224-2946

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City Turns Down Expensive Federal Dollars For Cops

Sunnyvale, California has been held up as a model of governmental efficiency. It is mentioned prominently in the 1992 book *Reinventing Government*, a book that helped launch a new enthusiasm for "doing more with less" (part of that new enthusiasm was Vice President Gore's National Performance Review). In the fall of 1993, President Clinton, Vice President Gore, and Labor Secretary Reich visited Sunnyvale and studied its practices.

One of Sunnyvale's remarkable practices is a 10-year budget that must be balanced in *each* of the out-years. Additionally, when the city is offered a grant from the state or the federal government, the city reviews the offer to see if it will be able to financially support the grant over 10 years and whether accepting the grant will further its short- or long-range goals.

Sunnyvale Offered Grant for Six Cops

Under the 1994 crime bill, Sunnyvale was entitled to a grant for six police officers under the COPS AHEAD program. The federal government would pay 75 percent of the total salary and benefits for each officer for the first year, 50 percent for the second year, and 25 percent for the third year up to a maximum cumulative total for each officer of \$75,000 for the three years. Remaining costs of employing the officers would be the responsibility of the city.

Sunnyvale estimates that it pays \$95,538 in salary and benefits for one police officer. (California's labor costs are extremely high.) Vehicle and equipment costs add another \$3,227. Therefore, the annual cost to Sunnyvale for one police officer is \$98,765. As a result, the total, three-year grant from the federal government does not cover the cost of even one officer for one year.

Sunnyvale's Costs

Sunnyvale hires police officers for the long-term. It hires and trains them with the expectation that it will retain them. The city, factoring in inflation and other costs, estimates its own cost over 10 years of accepting the federal government's offer for "help" in hiring six officers would be \$8.85 million.

So, over 10 years, the federal grant would pay 5 percent of the cost of the officers and the city would pay 95 percent!

Additionally, if the city were to accept the grant and its terms, it would be dedicating millions of dollars for officers that must be used for certain purposes when it may in fact have other, higher priorities, whether in public safety or not.

Hundreds of cities have accepted COPS money, but Sunnyvale and others have turned it down because they have recognized the true cost of the grants.

Staff contact: Lincoln Oliphant, 224-2946